

17 May 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

4956 '99 MAY 24 P12:01

RE: FSIS Docket 97-076P

We are writing to ask that any irradiated food product be conspicuously labeled as such and that there be no expiration date for this consumer warning.

Irradiating food is experimental. There is no long-term data to support the claim that it does not cause human health effects. Data like this comes only from doing long-term clinical trials with people giving informed consent. As consumers, we do not wish to participate in a long term, uncontrolled clinical trial of this practice.

If the practice of food irradiation is approved, and members of the public are forced to be part of this de facto experiment, the food must at least be conspicuously labelled. Any irradiated food -- meat, poultry, or multi-ingredient products made with these products -- needs to carry the international irradiation symbol (radura). There should also be text stating that there is at present no long-term data about possible health effects of food irradiation. Only then can consumers buying irradiated food give informed consent. There should be no expiration period for this labeling requirement.

We feel that your permitting an experiment into the effects of food irradiation without further study and without provisions for informing consumers would be a violation of your ethical responsibility to protect the public and the food supply. We depend on your careful efforts to help keep us safe -- and informed.

Thank you,



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